





The Connection of Conflict with Destiny.

A

# DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BUFFALO,

APRIL 10, 1864,

THE SABBATH NEXT AFTER THE BURIAL OF

AARON RUMSEY, Esq.

BY JOEL F. BINGHAM,

PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATION.

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*"For as a Prince hast thou power with God and with men and hast prevailed."*

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BUFFALO:  
FRANKLIN STEAM PRINTING HOUSE.  
THOMAS, TYPOGRAPHER.

1864.



At a meeting of the Session of Westminster Church, Buffalo, held April 11th, 1864, the following resolutions were adopted :

*Whereas*, It has pleased our Heavenly Father to remove from this world, as we trust, to a better our greatly honored and beloved associate, Aaron Rumsey, Esq., therefore, in token of our respect and affection for his memory and our gratitude for his fidelity and great services to this church and people,

*Resolved*, That we desire to record our unspeakable sorrow at this afflictive event, by which this Session is deprived of the sympathy and counsels of an amiable, pious and influential member, by which this church loses one of her strongest pillars and the cause of Christ at large and this whole community is sensibly bereaved.

*Resolved*, That we trust, however, the wisdom and goodness of that Providence whose dispensations cannot err and gratefully own our debt to Divine mercy for the gift of such a man and for continuing him a blessing among us for so many years.


*Resolved*, That while we shall fondly cherish his memory in our hearts as an incomparable friend and a mighty man in affairs, we shall be comforted by the confidence that our loss is his immeasurable gain and that while we miss his presence and labors here below, he is doing nobler service in the presence of his Lord on high.

*Resolved*, That we tender our most affectionate condolence to the bereaved family, praying that the God of all comfort may solace them in this day of trial and lead them gently and safely on to a glorious meeting with the husband and father who has gone before.

*Resolved*, That the discourse of our Pastor preached yesterday afternoon bearing reference to the life and struggles of the deceased is a truthful delineation of his character and a deserved tribute to his great worth; that it has comforted us in our bereavement; that we deem it calculated to do good by inspiring others to imitate such an example; and that with the permission of its author it be printed for private distribution.

*Resolved*, That these resolutions be entered on our records; that they be printed in connection with the funeral discourse; and that a copy be presented to the family of the deceased.

H. PARMELEE,  
*Clerk of Session.*



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# DISCOURSE.

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I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT.—II. TIMOTHY, IV. 7.

THE necessity to fight even in behalf of a good cause cannot be, in itself considered, the best condition of existence. We instinctively feel that quiet possession and peaceful enjoyment are essential constituents of a state of complete ideal good. Then, too, the most justifiable struggle may be conducted in such a way as to become a wretched and dishonorable encounter. But if the conflict is inevitable, if the struggle must come, then, the fight becomes good according to the manner in which it is pursued and the results which it is competent to attain. Prowess, skill and especially success make of the inevitable conflict a good fight. Under these circumstances, it becomes

at least a deliverance from defeat and from danger; and it may become the strait yet felicitous entrance upon a superior field of existence and one that is worth more than the toil which it cost. The life-long conflict of Saint Paul was in all respects such a conflict. Whether we look at the cause for which he struggled, or the zeal with which he contended, or the results which he had already gained and still more those which will eternally follow, we feel that he had a right to say, "*I have fought a good fight.*"

It is true that Saint Paul was called to a variety of struggles from which the great majorities of Christian men are now exempt. There is less fierceness and terror to be encountered now in "contending for the faith once delivered to the saints;" or, at least, the forms of resistance have been greatly modified, since the day when he and his brethren met the persecutions of the wicked and fought the good fight, "resisting even unto blood."

But there are three great aspects still in which this triumphant declaration was no more true of Saint Paul, than it will be found true, or fail to be found true, in the case of every



human life. For there are three great, inevitable battle-fields upon which every man, especially every Christian man, is brought, where he is put to the hazard of defeat and at the same time presented with the opportunity of winning a victory and entering into a possession of its honorable rewards.

I. To begin at the beginning, *physical life itself is one protracted battle with death*. Existence here below we hold as a kind of disputed possession which is ours only while we are able successfully to defend the frail citadel of mortality and to keep at bay the besieging forces of the enemy. All our years and all our health we clutch, as it were, a temporary conquest, wrested from an army of fleshly ills and maintained against the steadily advancing tread of time. But while it is unalterably true that we come into the world in bodies of mortality and are put at once upon the struggle against terrible odds, yet the space and the value of the activity which is even thus proposed to us does not stand altogether unalterable. It is true that the day of physical surrender must come; but, feeble and straitened as the resources of human infirmity

look, and really are, it is not true that no efforts of wisdom, or resolution, will avail to enlarge the boundaries of effective existence. It is not true that all the actual sufferings and incapacities of our damaged race are the inevitable result of a hopeless, iron-handed mortality. It is not true that the diseases and catastrophies which sweep multitudes into premature graves are the helpless victories of an irresistible destiny, overriding all possible resistance and eluding every possible precaution. It is not true that the entire multitude of lives which are protracted in languishing and anguish, useless to the world and almost worthless to the possessors, are the irreclaimable trophies of certain malign forces of destruction which no human strength, or foresight, can restrain. The truth is that the race is unfaithful to itself. Men are traitors against their own lives. It is amazing how universally the obvious means of protection are abandoned through a shrinking from the cost of exertion, or a recoil from the sacrifice of self-restraint. How far need you walk on any frequented street to fall in with a youthful voluptuary, a gay young man, so called? His step is buoyant, his pulse bounds,

the unspent energies of opening manhood promise every fair and honorable and useful development. But these days of excitement, these nights of debauchery—how long do they precede exhausted vitality, acute disease, premature death—a life thrown away? How far need you walk on that street of sumptuous dwellings, or how many of those sumptuous dwellings need you enter to find an example of youthful womanhood enfeebled, by indolence, or fevered and prostrated by an overstrained pursuit of gaiety and fashion? How far need you prosecute the search to discover sensibilities damaged, nerves disordered, morbid tastes, discomfort, discontent, disease laying a short stairway into the grave. If you turn from the haunts of luxury and look over the fields of toil, the money and advantages which the former class use to aid them in throwing away their lives the latter throw away their lives to gain. The coveted possession, for the most part, is gold and its fascinating equivalents, houses, lands, equipage, stocks, bonds, goods. It may be social position and influence, it may be pleasure. To secure the dazzling bauble, of whatever variety it be, a man

will subject his body without stint to every extreme of fatigue and of danger. He will brave the heat of the tropics, the frosts of the pole, the malaria of the wilderness. One imprisons himself in his counting-room and, without rest, or abatement, drives on his hurried schemes of traffic and adventure, relentlessly, but no more relentlessly, than the days and months and years are wearing away the possibility of those hopes which he is staking all to realize. The frenzy of enterprise which rages within him steadily strains and proceeds to uproot the foundations of life. Another, as madly bent on an immortality in politics, arts, or letters, wears himself out in superhuman struggles, anxieties, or studies. Another, for gain, or glory, undertakes amazing and perilous feats of physical strength, or dexterity, and carelessly sports with the fearful stake. Another, from some temporal, or spiritual whim, denies to his body her necessary comforts and nourishments and, though it is never spoken, actually dies by self-inflicted cruelty and starvation. Here and there another, from whatever motive, applies the knife, the pistol, the poison, casting away life at a fling, and is

called a suicide. But how much less suicides and criminals are they who, under any pretext, damage, or enfeeble, the body in which God has drafted them to the battle-field of life! How extensively, then, do the majorities of men prove traitorous to their physical lives! How feebly, how ignominiously the multitudes of the race fight the battle of life in the body! Yet our bodies are the Lord's. Our bodies constitute the visible soldiery of God on earth with which He proposes to conquer the forces of sin and to alleviate human misery. Our vital energy He condescends to make the receptacle of the Holy Ghost, while He commands our strength and directs our efforts. He has employment for every muscle. Every iota of our bodily capacity is needed and summoned to this sacred military service of our Lord. The conflict and the service which He proposes even to this mortal energy is to be rewarded in a world of immortality. So little, therefore, is it a thing to be despised, or neglected, much less to be damaged, or trifled with, till the last blow has been struck for God, the last duty rendered to His cause and the order of discharge has translated the soldier to his

eternal pension in the skies. Nobly did Saint Paul struggle in the flesh, while enduring with an amazing vigor his prodigious exposures! Every beat of his pulse was husbanded to strike, or to endure, some new blow for the Cross. When he came to take up his martyr crown, an old man, at the end of a long hard service for Christ, yet able still to endure hardness as a good soldier, surely it was no mean triumph of the body for God.

II. In the next place, *it is patent upon the face of society everywhere that character, position, wealth, influence are obtained among men by a struggle and come as the spoils of a conquest.* There is something, it is true, of all this which may come and does come unsought to a few by the necessary conditions of society and by the sovereign hand of Providence. But there is also much which does not and cannot come in this way. That which comes as an inheritance, or a legacy, wholly from an exterior source and unearned, while it may be solid and brilliant, cannot possibly be so assimilated to the person of its possessor, nor can it possibly constitute a personal quality of the same efficiency and vigor as that which



is, as it were, the very outgrowth of his own life and springs from the peculiar properties of his own individuality. The man whose influence, in whatever sphere, actually exerts the most effective power upon men will not be found to be one who has received his position by birth, or accident, alone, but it is he who has won his place, or, at least, has ratified again his title thereto, by the prowess of his own activity and who assumes it as a conquest which he himself has won.

Now that differences of station and influence, however acquired, are in any considerable degree fraught with equal differences of advantage and happiness we do not believe; nor will we attempt to determine whether it be really better, or more noble, in itself considered, when the springs of sentiment are equally pure and the motives to action are equally earnest, to stand high and strong and to be ever ascending in name and power, than it were to stand upon a lower footing and to move ever evenly forward on the same more humble level. But it is certain, we think, that a temper which is voluntarily satisfied with mediocrity is not the foundation for the best and noblest type of

character, when considered in respect to those relations which are outward and public, and least of all, for a Christian character. It lies in the very nature of martial struggles to foster aspirations to excel; and the Christian life is pre-eminently a moral *warfare*. It needs the energy, the endurance, the quickening spirit of a sanctified ambition. An ingenuous, aspiring instinct has always been the principle which has led men on to the great, useful, heroic doings of the world—doings to which men of lowlier impulses, however excellent and amiable, could never have risen and which they would never have attempted. The whole life of Saint Paul is one unbroken story of his struggles for superiority. He counsels his brethren to “covet earnestly the best gifts;” and for himself he could not be content to stand “a whit behind the very chiefest apostles” and would not be robbed of the pre-eminence of having “labored more abundantly than they all.” It is understood, of course, that all possessions and all attainments must be consecrated to the glory of Christ and the putting forward His cause. But this being assumed and given, we cannot but feel that the battle of life will be



rendered the most glorious by the widest scope and the nearest imitation of this Pauline ambition ; because thus mankind will be the most benefited, piety in the world the most advanced and God and the Redeemer the most glorified.

III. Finally, *every believer in Christ is called to a struggle for the attainment of holiness as a preparation for immortality.* For though the essential change of temper which translates a man from the kingdom of sin and darkness into that disposition of penitence, piety and prayer which is called the kingdom of God is a work of supernatural grace to which no human struggles, however painful, however protracted, could ever attain ; though regeneration is doubtless the miraculous work of a moment and the conflict between the human will and the Divine may culminate in an instantaneous conversion to God ; though peace of conscience may enter the soul from that blessed moment and flow on unbroken like the river of God ; yet peace of conscience is not identical with a cessation of hostilities in the soul ; and it does not imply that the natural dispositions are completely pacified and subjugated. On the contrary, the good work of grace, however

genuine, however powerful and controlling in the favored soul, is never finished and never brought to a consummation of triumphant repose here below ; but the order which Divine mercy has laid down for our spiritual deliverance is one of gradual conquest which contemplates no completion till the soul herself passes into the world of light. In cases like that of the penitent thief on the third cross of Calvary and here and there a death-bed conversion now, the campaign indeed is short ; but we must add, too, it is one of doubtful glory, little to be envied, still less to be hazarded. Our little ones whose brief career has flitted across our pathway and vanished like a dream have happily escaped the terror and turmoil of this conflict in the soul. They have been ransomed by blood Divine, while the opportunity of damning unbelief has never been offered them. Hurried away to the arms of that Saviour whom they have never distrusted, or grieved, they have anticipated conversion, outrun the battle of life and entered early into an appointed, peculiar, glorified rest. But while the assurance of their undoubted bliss is a precious solace to the pang of our parental bereavement, it

is a dispensation which stands widely apart from that established course of human renewal which is coupled with a progressive return toward God. The good man's soul continues to be the theatre of conflicting forces whose varying successes cause for him a burden of constant care and startle him with many an anxious alarm even up to the moment when he closes his eyes on a deceitful world and opens them on the safe, eternal realities of heaven. It is a conflict, we say, from which there is no escape, but that of shameful surrender and perdition. It is a war in the members from which there is no discharge, but the final dissolution of the body from the soul: Saint Paul has taxed the extremity of language to express the magnitude and intensity of his struggles in the spiritual life. "I am carnal," exclaims he, "sold under sin." "What I would that do I not, but what I hate that do I." "When I would do good, evil is present with me." "I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I

am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Even in his later days, in view of the amazing spiritual conquests which had been already won within him, he would only exclaim, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended that for which I have been apprehended of Christ; but all I am able to do is to forget that which is behind and give myself wholly to the strife and the hopes of the future." This risk and this struggle, then, are the price of a victor's joy. "To him that overcometh," saith the Master, "to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God." "He shall not be hurt of the second death." "I will give him to eat of the hidden manna." "He shall be clothed with white raiment." "I will give him a white stone and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." "I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God; and I will write upon him my new name." "He shall inherit all things, I will be his God and he shall be

my son." "I will grant to him to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne." Oh, who would covet, even the sweet, swift career of the infant of days, in comparison with the scarred conqueror's eternal reward?

The view of life which we have now made to pass before you has been designed to be introductory to what we wish to say of the venerable Christian citizen and officer in this church whose recent departure from this life to a better has left a painful vacancy here and spread a pall over the hearts of this whole community. For every one of you, we think, who has enjoyed the privilege of an acquaintance with him must have felt, during the progress of these remarks, how truthfully and appropriately our departed friend might have said with the apostle, as he stepped from the stage, "*I have fought a good fight.*"

Mr. Rumsey, being among the number of our oldest citizens, of course, was not a native here. When he first opened his eyes upon the world, this city had no existence and this whole vicinity was a wilderness. His first breath was the air of New England; and

there in the midst of its mountains, its morality and its thrift, his early youth was passed. He was born of pious parents, who were in connection with the Baptist denomination, at Hubbardton, Rutland County, Vermont, May 6th, 1797, being the eighth of ten children, five sons and five daughters. Two of the younger children, a son and a daughter, died in youth, while the remaining eight, of whom he was the youngest son, all lived to mature years, all became heads of families, all proved decided Christians and all at different times removed from Vermont and settled for life in various parts of this State.

His father was a tanner and farmer of moderate pecuniary means, yet possessed of great simplicity and force of character; and though he could give to his children but little worldly substance for their start in life, he gave them what was better than wealth, and what actually brought more than one of them to wealth, habits of assiduous industry, of a provident thrift and of the strictest honesty. He was a parent after the rigid model of the Pilgrims. If he was somewhat stern and driving and held his family to labor a little more strictly



than necessity seemed to require, it was because he regarded labor as the great safe-guard of virtue, because he was anxious that his children should become habituated to constant and useful employment and was determined, if discipline would do it, that their young energies should be consolidated into the perpetual habit of an active, honest, well-aimed life. This was the type of character which was impressed on Mr. Rumsey during his whole childhood with all the force of a father's precept, example and authority.

His mother, too, though she appears to have possessed less of the nerve and fire which was often found in the matrons of those early and hardy times, yet, in the aspect of piety, was a very remarkable woman—remarkable alike for the depth of her religious convictions and for her fidelity in pressing the claims of religion upon the attention of her children. Not only did she set before them the constant example of one who was manifestly living for the service of God and living more for eternity than for time, but her lips were perpetually dropping upon their heads fitly spoken words of warning, exhortation and prayer. To see

them converted to God and to be assured that they would lead lives of religion and usefulness in the world was the unceasing burden of her soul. It might with truth and emphasis be said that she "travailed in birth again with them daily until Christ should be formed in them." It is doubtful if a day ever passed in which each of them did not receive from her some word which was designed to draw their hearts from the world and to win them to Christ; and it was an ordinary occurrence with her, taking them one by one, to kneel at her fireside and commend them to God, pleading over them the promises of His grace. How could we expect anything else, but the early conversion and decided Christian character of children who were thus warned and wooed and nurtured for God?

Mr. Rumsey's boyhood was thoroughly conversant with toil. His early years were passed in assisting at his father's business and in attending the district school during three months of the winter. Everywhere his physical prowess was great. In the sports of the school-boys his superior strength coupled with a perpetual flow of exuberant spirits made him always a leader



there, while at home, in the manual employments at which he was engaged with his father's workmen, he was always *facile princeps* at every sort of labor. It is related that his frequent manner was to obtain from his father a certain task, as his portion of the labor in hand, and then turn it off so speedily, as to gain a whole day for himself which he would spend in assisting some neighbor, earning wages for his private purse. Labor was his element, he excelled in it, he enjoyed it and his heart was always as light as the lark's.

At the age of twenty, with no other capital than his character and a thorough knowledge of the hereditary trade of his family, he turned his thoughts westward and determined to settle at Warsaw, Wyoming County, in this State. The journey of more than four hundred miles he accomplished on foot. Starting from his father's home, in the month of June, 1817, with a small bundle in his hand which comprised his whole property, in a little less than three weeks, he arrived, weary and foot-sore, at his destination. On the last day of that journey, an incident occurred which he never for-

got and which, as he often declared, operated throughout his life to render him more thoughtfully gentle and obliging toward the young and the dependent. When but a few miles remained, the thought of finishing his long and tedious travels having excited him to push on with unusual speed, as the day drew to a close, he found himself almost prostrated by fatigue. Just then, a man of respectable appearance and alone happened to be driving past him on the road. The temptation was too strong to be resisted and he asked the favor of a ride, or at least that his bundle might be carried, to a certain place in the next town. But his appearance was against him. He was covered with dust; he carried his bundle slung from a stick over his shoulder; his hat was jammed; and he was staggering with the soreness of his feet and with fatigue. Both his requests were peremptorily and harshly refused. In reciting the story, he has told me that none of his later losses and disappointments, though sometimes involving tens of thousands, have ever affected him with such a pang of mortification and discouragement as then smote his

young heart. The stranger, however, was not always to continue a stranger to the dusty, tired lad whom he had so cruelly slighted. He lived to know him, and often to meet him, as one of our leading merchants and wealthiest citizens. The memory of that act, one cannot but believe, brought to its author many an unpleasant reflection, while it inspired the object of it to that life-long vigilance in which we have admired him lending his ever ready sympathy and aid to the needy and the friendless.

He soon entered into a business partnership with an older brother who had settled in Warsaw several years before. The business was prosecuted successfully here and his affairs began to prosper. Early in the summer of 1827, having some years before become united in marriage to the lady who now survives him and having already acquired some worldly substance, he removed his family and his business to Westfield, Chatauqua County, in this State, where pecuniary success still attended him and he steadily accumulated property. It was here that God met him with the irresistible power of His grace. Some time in the winter

of 1830, the Rev. Samuel G. Orton, a man full of faith and prayer who has since become so extensively known in this region and whom so many regard as their spiritual father, laboring at that time in the vicinity as an evangelist, came to Westfield, while a series of daily religious meetings were in progress there. Discovering, in some way, that Mr. Rumsey was in a state of religious anxiety, he followed him one evening from the meeting to his house, and, late in the night, conversing with him affectionately and faithfully, became the apparent instrument of bringing him to Christ. His change, from the first, was great and decided. He had passed through at least three powerful revivals in his native town without apparent concern; during his residence at Warsaw, he had been brought more or less into contact with a revived state of religious feeling without receiving any obvious spiritual impulse; but, now, God laid hold on him with a power which he could neither evade nor withstand. At the age of thirty-two, he came out for the first time as the friend of Jesus, but he came out prominently, at once, and continued ever after an eminently active

Christian man. While he cherished a life-long sentiment of gratitude toward Mr. Orton, of whom he often spoke and for whom he felt to the last a strong personal affection, he greatly disliked to be called the convert of any man, or to hear any man's converts spoken of. "I hope," he would say, "I am a convert of the Lord."

He came to reside in this city in 1834, connecting himself, also, the same year, with the First Presbyterian Church, then under the pastoral care of Dr. Hopkins. He was always to be found at the week-day lectures and meetings for prayer, was always engaged in the Sunday School and, everywhere, was a participant in every good word and work; and these qualities, taken in connection with his now large and constantly increasing pecuniary ability, soon made him one of the pillars in that congregation.

In the autumn of 1835, the declining health of his wife induced him to visit the Southern States of the Union. Here he passed the ensuing winter in traveling, for the most part, within the limits of Mississippi and Louisiana, and, in his migratory stay, had much intercourse with the planters. He also spent the winter of

1858-59, for a similar reason, in South Carolina. We think it worthy of notice—and the more so because it has sometimes proved otherwise with Northern men—that his sentiments in the matter of slavery underwent no essential change by coming into the closest contact with it and observing it in its most peculiar home. He hated and dreaded it before, he hated and dreaded it still.

His worldly prosperity, though on the whole it was very remarkable through life, yet did not suffer him to escape unscathed by great reverses. During his first visit to the South, a great commercial crisis swept over the land; and he came home to find himself with thousands of others financially a ruined man. But his courage was undaunted. He had now passed the prime of middle life, yet he earnestly began anew. Providence smiled upon him more bountifully than ever before, within a very few years his fortune was more than repaired and he has long stood again among the wealthiest of our citizens.

During the years 1831-32, a church edifice was built on Lafayette street, fronting upon the north side of the Park; and, soon after, a



Christian society was organized there, under the name of the Free Church. The experiment of free pews, however, failed ; and a new organization was formed, in 1839, under the name of the Park Presbyterian Church. When this second effort was put forward there, yielding to a sentiment of duty and in company with about thirty others, he transferred his church relations thither. Here he was elected, for the first time, to the eldership of the church and was ordained in 1840. The new enterprise, however, through some unforeseen hindrances, proving unsuccessful at that time, he and nearly all who came with him returned, after about four years, to their former connection with the First Church. In 1852, he was elected to the eldership there and continued to do active and large Christian service in that congregation, until the removal of his residence from Swan to Delaware street brought him near to a younger church which needed him, when he again broke away from the cherished Christian bonds which had been growing for a quarter of a century and united himself here, September 13th, 1857. In December, of the same year, he was elected to the eldership of this church ; and it would not

be easy to tell how it were possible for a man to show himself to be more deeply interested in the welfare of a congregation, or more conscientiously faithful to the duties of his office, than he has shown himself to be among us, from that day forward to the close of his career. That he was a tower of strength here you need not be told. This house is his monument, in the sense that he not only contributed toward the cost of its erection double the amount of any other donor, with one munificent exception, but, when the subscription had flagged and seemed ready to fail at about half the necessary amount, he seized the paper and, devoting some days to the work, by dint of his peculiar vigor, skill and personal influence, brought the figures up to a point at which it was deemed safe to go forward; and, eventually, he assumed a conditional responsibility for the remainder. He was elected to the board of trustees of this society in 1857, was soon after made president of the board and continued in this position till his decease.

In the spring of 1862, one of his sons, in the hope of deriving benefit to a state of health which had become seriously impaired, deter-



mined upon journeying abroad with his family. More from anxiety for the result of the experiment upon his son and from a desire to be near him, than from any other motive, he decided to be one of the company and, on the ninth of April, sailed from New York for Liverpool. The summer was spent in traveling in England and on the continent. Though now nearly seventy years old, he climbed mountains and waded up through the volcanic ashes of Vesuvius with the youngest and the halest. Under the excitement of the time, the fire of youth seemed to return and nothing could exceed the zest with which he threw himself into the exhilarations of foreign travel. The health of his son improving and being himself sated with sight-seeing, he left the rest of the party to continue their travels and returned home in the following autumn. He never acknowledged the consciousness of any inconvenience as arising from his travels abroad; yet to a familiar eye it was plain that he had brought back much less vigor than he carried away. He seemed during those months of absence to have grown old by years; and his accustomed elasticity of nerve and muscle never

returned. From this time, his descent, though almost imperceptible, was steady and sure. Within a few swift months, he reached the shore of the shoreless sea and departed from our sight on his last and best journey, at early dawn of the sixth day of April, 1864.

In the meeting for social worship, as nearly as I can remember, the last in which he was present, he spoke and prayed in a most remarkable manner. We always expected from him earnestness and fervor. We always expected him to draw upon the most solemn verities of religion and to deal with the deepest emotions of our hearts. But, on that evening, he seemed to have received a new anointing. His mind was wonderfully clarified and quickened and his heart was stirred to its lowest depths. With moistened eyes and a manner of abasement in the dust before God, he brought before us, out of the manifest sincerity of a full heart, the emptiness of this world, the great and transient privilege of doing good, the brevity of life, the preciousness of the Christian's hope and the claims of perishing souls on our sympathy, prayers and efforts; and then, he poured out his soul in prayer with a tenderness, a copious-

ness and a power which seemed to bring heaven near to that room of prayer. I was touched and could not forbear to speak of it to a friend, as we left the place ; but little did we dream that his spirit was, even then, pluming her pinions for the everlasting flight.

His disease, at first, laid a gentle hand upon him and confined him to his parlor. Here, though none of us then apprehended an approaching dissolution, he conversed with me, often, upon personal religion ; and he seemed never to be quite satisfied until the conversation had turned upon some aspect of the great realities of existence. " I have been thinking," said he to me one afternoon, " I have been thinking, all the morning, whether I would be put back again into youth, if I could, and start as a young man again, even if I could keep my experience, some of which I bought very dear, and could avoid what I have found to be mistakes. At first I thought I would, but, on reflection, I wouldn't. I have tried a great many conditions in life ; I have seen its dark sides and its bright sides ; I have felt its ups and downs ; I have been gratified and I have been disappointed ; I have failed and I have succeeded ;

and I am satisfied that one experience of life is sufficient. I have had enough of it. Its best successes will not pay—will not pay for the necessary struggle—will not pay for the temptation and risk of character—will not pay a man who is prepared to die for staying away from a better world.”

When his disease had at length forced him down upon the bed from which he never rose, often, in my daily visits, I still received the most precious assurance that the Saviour was leading His trusting servant, gently and comfortably down, into the thickening shades of the dark valley. His faith and Christian peace seemed never for a moment to waver. At one time, having silently entered the room, I sat at his bed-side hardly expecting that he would rouse to recognize me, from the deep lethargy into which he had sunk, when he opened his eyes and seeing me there said with an effort to smile, “Oh, is it you? God bless you in your work! It is uncertain if I shall ever do much more, but I pray God to bless His word.” At another time, it was a Sabbath morning, as he opened his drowsy eyes and saw me sitting there, he said, “I know you have a message for

the people to-day, you must go and deliver it and my prayers go with you." At another time, in reply to my inquiry whether he could now leave himself and all with confidence and comfort in the hands of the Saviour, he said, in a slow and feeble voice, but with an emphasis which I shall never forget, for he seemed to weigh the meaning of every word, "I think I can truly say I know that my Redeemer liveth." All his later utterances, indeed, have been such as Christian solicitude is ever eager at such a time to secure and have been all that Christian affection could desire. But we needed no such last words to tell us where his hope and his treasure lay.

The first aspect of Mr. Rumsey's character which would probably arrest the notice of a stranger and one which would continue to grow upon the attention of every observer, the longer an acquaintance continued, was *his all-conquering energy*. You could not be a half hour in his company, though it were for the first time, without gaining the impression that he was a mighty man; and you could not have made your acquaintance so extended, or have been admitted to a familiarity so intimate,

as ever to bring you to cease from wondering at the prodigious forces of being which were combined in his character. While there was not a vestige of asperity, or of censoriousness, in his nature, which was as gentle and loving as a lamb, yet his heart was a lion-heart and his hand, a hand of iron. So dominant and pervading was this energetic element as to stamp itself in a distinct and distinguishing feature upon the current of his whole life, physical, social, religious.

His bodily frame was cast in a mould of strength. His stature rose a good way above the ordinary height, his whole figure was suitably proportioned upon the same large scale and the first glance impressed you with the idea of physical power. During almost a score of years after that period of life when the majority of men sensibly feel the weight of years and exhibit evident signs of growing infirmity, the elasticity of his step and the easy activity of his limbs made you wonder still at the endurance and vigor of that giant frame. His vital forces had never been hoarded by avoiding the exhaustion of labor, exposure, or anxiety; for few men are called to severer struggles of



every sort, than was he, especially in his younger life; but he inherited a firm constitution which was well fostered by the pure air and frugal culture of his early home; and his life-long habits of temperance, industry and severe regularity produced that perfection of health and that extraordinary power of exertion which remained unimpaired, until the vital force itself was spent and only relaxed its hold on material things before the inevitable law of nature. But though the body must sink, at last, it is certainly felicitous, it is enviable, it is grand, thus to live this mortal life in the flesh, thus to wrest from disease and infirmity fruitful years of strength and labor; and, while the majority of men are wasting so much of their earthly existence in pain and idleness, to redeem a strong, whole life to useful activity and the service of God. Surely such an one, and he was eminently such an one, may justly and triumphantly say, "By the grace of God, even with the energies of my mortal body, *I have fought a good fight.*"

Socially—in every sphere of outward life and influence—the energy of his character was as obvious, as the results were abundant and

honorable. Wherever practical projects were to be wrought out, wherever business was to be transacted, wherever men were to be dealt with, while perfect integrity and fairness always ruled the hour, yet nothing which vigor, promptness and rapidity could accomplish, ever failed in his hands. Some such project was perpetually under his attention. He could not be idle for an hour; nor could he be contentedly occupied with anything which did not directly contribute to some desired and useful end. If, as is often said, circumstances alone force some men into wealth, standing and influence, the remark bears no application to him. Whatever he was, whatever he had, whatever he accomplished was reached, obtained, wrought out, under a favoring Providence, by the nerve of his own arm and the courage and kindness of his own heart; and every one, who knows anything of the rush and turmoil of worldly affairs, knows that these ascending grades, especially in the path of commercial enterprise, are not to be trod by mediocrity, or sloth, but are accomplished, if at all, by a series of conquests over difficulties and in the face of oppositions of the most stern and trying sort. In



these struggles of men, in sagacity, skill and labor, as well as in those smoother and more benign exertions which he was ever making in the interest of morality and religion, friendship and benevolence, he always wrought with the arm of a giant and with the ardent enthusiasm of one who was doing with his might what his hand found to do. Oh, what a cloud of witnesses might be summoned before you, here, to-day, to testify how his delicate attentions of friendship and his bountiful acts of benevolence were perpetually carried forward with the same assiduity and the same whole-heartedness, as the strictest and most profitable transactions of commerce! It is true that such qualities and such exertions do not always succeed, in the obvious results of the present existence. Possessing exactly the same qualities and making the same exertions, he might have been less successful, less appreciated, loved and honored, had God been pleased to thwart his plans and defeat his exertions, as the Infinite One often sees fit to do with the wisest human plans and the most vigorous human exertions. But he was not defeated. A favoring Providence was pleased to crown his struggles with final and

great success; and, as he passed away to a nobler life, what less could his thankful, contented spirit say, than this, "By the grace of God, *I have fought a good fight*, even in respect to the sordid collisions of time?"

These aspects of life, while they seem worthy and profitable to be noted, when appearing so conspicuous as they appeared in the subject of these remarks, yet fade into insignificance, in comparison with that view which is religious, spiritual, eternal. But then, the religious life is essentially an invisible development. It is of necessity an inner, hidden, unseen process. We are left mainly to judge by external signs of what has been accomplished in secret. We may see evident results, but the inward processes lie beyond the sphere of observation. These results we have indeed perceived in him of whom we here speak, these fruits have been obvious in his visible life; and, though the actual strife of the spirit with depravity, the flesh and the world was a conflict which no fellow-creature could see and a thing which he seldom, or never, reported, we needed not to be told that these victories never come to a sinful nature, except through the hard, long,

persistent battle in the soul; we needed not to be told that the world cannot be trodden under foot by mortal man without a struggle. It is impossible here to go into details; and it is unnecessary. In the case before us we need only refer to a single instance. *Take the deadening power of riches upon the soul*; because this was his greatest peril and because the subjugation of that involves the subjugation of every other opposing influence. Look into the book of God and find it written, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Consider, from your own experience and from your observation of the world, how hard it is for the moderately successful in the things of time and sense to put property second to religion and lay their possessions at the feet of Jesus. Consider with what greater difficulty the rich man casts off his bags of gold and breaks away from his connections with the strong, the brilliant and the merry to join himself with the poor, the obscure, the sorrowful and in true simplicity to enter the low and narrow gate

which leads to the spiritual life. You will then be prepared to estimate for yourselves what forces of the enemy he was compelled to face and to decide whether his undoubted, triumphant victory, through grace Divine, does not sufficiently proclaim what must have been his experience of inward fightings and what was his claim to say, as he laid down the armor of spiritual conflict, "*I have fought a good fight.*"

The warrior has gone to his rest. His fighting is over, his battles are won, he is discharged into the joy of his Lord. Friendship must weep. Affection must bleed. His home must be solitary. Silence must succeed there to his pleasant, inspiring voice. His active form must be missed from the street, his influence from the walks of commerce, his cheerful face and kindly word from the circles of social intercourse, his venerable head from the sanctuary, his earnest petitions and impassioned appeals from the meeting for prayer. His family must lose him. Society must lose him. The poor must lose him. Struggling young men must lose him. The church militant must lose him. Allow me to add, his pastor must lose him, with the anguish of an unspeakable personal loss.

But what a memory he has left to this bereaved family ! Tell me, stricken ones, heavy as is the blow, whose lot of similar bereavement would you exchange for yours ? Tell me how the merciful Heavenly Father could have tempered more mildly the inevitable stroke ? Is it nothing to possess the imperishable recollections of such a life ? Is it nothing that his earthly existence was a triumph in every sense of that word ; and, though he departed in the strength of his years, that he had accomplished an extraordinary work for you, for society, for the church of Christ — enough to satisfy the sanctified ambition of any man — and left behind him nothing, but the eternal cause of his Master, unfinished ? Is it nothing that he goes with the benediction of thousands upon his head ; and that his memory will be embalmed, in their inmost heart, forever ? Above all, is it nothing to be able with rational confidence to follow the track of his liberated spirit and see him take his seat among the blest company of the redeemed above ? Is it nothing to know just where you may find him, while you need only prepare your own robes, to meet him at the marriage of the Lamb ?

Oh remember that he now awaits each of you, with solicitous affection! One by one you will pass through the gate which he has just entered. His sainted daughter is already at his side. May God permit him to gather you all, as you arrive; and when the last of you is passed within the veil, to lead you before the Saviour, there, and say, Here am I and the dear ones Thou hast given me.

Men of business and care! here is a lesson for you, from the experience of one of your most successful associates. In the full view of his life which has just been revived in your recollections, can you believe that a greater engrossment in the things of time is necessary to successful accumulation, than is compatible with that weaning from the world and that heavenly mind which religion professes and evidently demands? In the face of his life, will you ever say, again, that a man cannot make money, who holds it, nevertheless, as a thing second to his religion and who has set out in earnest to secure, at all events, the riches of eternity? Has not such a life, as it progressed for thirty years under your observation, been sufficient to demonstrate that such



a sentiment is an egregious, a tremendous mistake? He walked always, in equal step with the foremost, in the front rank of worldly enterprise and worldly success, yet he was, also, always endeavoring to walk with his God and to be laying up a better treasure in heaven. But if the one, or the other, must be sacrificed, how think you would he counsel you to choose to-day? Do you imagine that his opinion has changed, under the scenes into which he has passed? How think you does he regard the eternal riches, in comparison with those of earth, to-day? Of how much account is an earthly fortune, in the world to which he has so suddenly flown? I know that I speak what his own lips would dictate, when I press upon your attention that caution of Holy Writ, "Seek first," at all risks, "seek first the kingdom of heaven."

Brethren and friends of this bereaved congregation, a mighty man has fallen among us. A pillar is broken in God's house. We are shaken by the shock of the stroke. But turn to the Scriptures and read, that "no strange thing has occurred and no trial has overtaken us, but such as is common to man." It is



God who has called His servant away. The time of his departure, therefore, is right. Let us gird us anew for the work of the Lord! Hearing a voice from heaven saying to us, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils," let us manfully yield him to his Saviour and his reward!









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